



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/313,278	05/18/1999	DAVID M. GOLDENBERG	018733/916	3688

7590 02/27/2002

FOLEY & LARDNER
SUITE 500
3000 K STREET NW
P O BOX 25696
WASHINGTON, DC 200078696

EXAMINER

RIMELL, SAMUEL G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2166

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/313,278	GOLDENBERG, DAVID M.	
	Examiner Sam Rimell	Art Unit 2166	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-27 and 29-38 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-27, 29-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.

- 18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) Other: _____.

Claims 14-27 and 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 14: The phrase “at least one of medical, veterinary, or health care information” is indefinite.

Claim 15: The phrase “related to practice guidelines of the inquirer’s geographic region”.

Claim 30: The phrase “at least one of medical, veterinary or other health care information” is indefinite.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

Claims 1-17, 19-24 and 29-30 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Douglas et al. ('688).

Douglas et al. discloses a processing device which is configured to provide multiple levels of service to a user. At a first level of service, a user can perform research on the system website and download data and research articles containing medical information (col. 14, lines 54-57 and col. 16 lines 21-38). At a second level of service, the user can interact with a group therapist using on-line teleconferencing capabilities (col. 12, lines 8-22). At a third level of service, a user can be monitored for alarm conditions, and upon triggering of the alarm conditions, can be placed into electronic contact with the physician (col. 10, lines 17-31).

The processing device can use the alarm feature to distinguish between a need for additional information and a need for contact with a physician (col. 10, lines 17-31).

The system involves the interaction of a patient with at least two medical professionals: A medical doctor and a group therapist who monitors the on-line group therapy sessions.

The processing device receives an image of the patient and transmits to others during the group therapy sessions.

The patients who interact with the system have access to libraries of research studies (col. 16 line 34).

The patients who interact with the system receive medical treatment in the form of group psychotherapy.

The processing device monitors the status and progress of the patient by use of a journal function (FIG. 12).

The processing device has a weighing function in the form of a programmed alarm system, which weighs responses from a user and decides whether those responses are compliant or non-compliant with desired pre-set goals (col. 10 lines 17-31).

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 18 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Douglas et al. ('688).

Art Unit: 2166

The system of Douglas et al. ('688) allows a user to access a physician but does not specifically allow a user to select from a listing of different physicians. Examiner takes Official Notice that it is well known in the art of insurance plans to produce listings of approved physicians and provide this information in various media, such as in booklets, telephonic referral services and on-line via a network. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Douglas et al. to utilize a physician referral service, either on-line, or by providing phone number so as to permit telephonic access to such data, as is well known in the art to permit patient access to insurance approved physicians.

Claims 14, 20, 25-27, 30 and 32-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Brown ('563).

Brown ('563) discloses a system that allows a patient to interact with a physician via a wide area network or the Internet. The system has a first level of service where the system can direct a series of questions to the patient (FIG. 16) or, on a second level, receive measured data such as blood glucose level, blood pressure, pulse and temperature(col. 11, line 28 and col. 11, lines 52-57).

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility.

Claim 38 is addressed entirely to an abstract concept of providing optional levels of service. There is no claimed process involved and no method steps providing for providing an actual application of the service. Since there are no method steps outlining what actions to take,

Art Unit: 2166

there is no requirement that any of the levels be used. There is no physical structure, machine or computer system that supports the levels of service. The levels of service are also not a manufactured item or a composition of matter. Accordingly, the claimed invention is found to be lacking in utility, and thus non-statutory.

Remarks

Applicant's arguments regarding the references to Douglas et al. and Brown have been considered but are not well taken. Applicant argues that neither reference establishes levels of service e in which the degree of user interaction varies with the level.

Examiner finds that such a feature clearly resides in both the Douglas et al. and Brown references.

In Douglas et al., users can interact on an informational level, or interact on a higher, invasive level of contact where they are monitored for specific conditions.

In Brown, users can interact on a question and answer level, or a higher invasive level of contact where they are monitored for specific conditions.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Sam Rimell at telephone number (703) 306-5626.



Sam Rimell
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2166